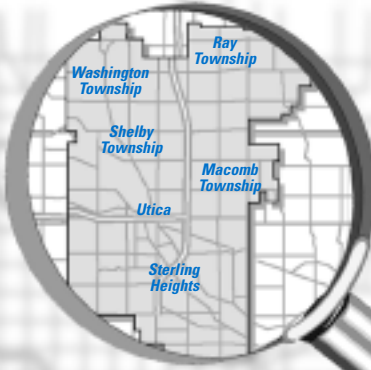


# FOCUS for the community



A Publication for the Residents of Utica Community Schools

**From the Superintendent...**



by Christine M. Johns, Ed.D.

**Student Achievement remains our top priority, regardless of the economy**

No matter where we turn, indicators of growing concern about the economy are everywhere. Stock market reports chronicle the ebb and flow of trading volatility. The nightly news projects declines in the job market. Our subdivisions are dotted with for sale signs – the sign of the times. Even the candidates in the presidential primary have made the nation's economy their top priority.

While no one has the definitive answer for an economic turn-around, most sources agree: An educated work force will enhance economic recovery. And those states that can keep an educated work force as their majority residents will be among the first to see a revitalized and prosperous economy.

Who better to provide Michigan with an educated work force than its public schools? In particular, Utica Community Schools is positioned to prepare students for success in the 21st Century job market. It is

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## Volunteers say: "It's all for the kids!"



**Teresa Dwyer** is flanked by Schwarzkoff Elementary students **Daniella Suvak, Laura Kruse, Mohamed El-Ghoroury** and **Robert Tamburro**, all members of her Science Olympiad team. They are using a mini-weather station to learn about and measure wind direction and speed, air temperature, humidity and rainfall in preparation for competing in the Weather or Not category at the Macomb County Science Olympiad. Teresa, who is employed as the school's office clerk, works with the students after school. She became a volunteer coach several years ago when her own children wanted to participate.

Ask any of the district's approximately 4,500 school volunteers why they help in UCS classrooms or with Lego Robotics, sports, band, field trips and so much more, and their answer overwhelmingly will be: "It's all for the kids!"

On behalf of the "kids," the Board of Education recently honored our volunteers with an official resolution for making time in their busy lives—roughly 100,000 hours each year—to benefit UCS students. Their talents and efforts strengthen

the bond between community, home and school and make UCS a better place for student learning.

Many of our volunteers continue helping at the schools after their own children have grown. Three

such individuals, Teresa Dwyer, Harry Radtke and Lou Ann Ross, each of whom this year notched their twentieth year of volunteerism, were singled out for special appreciation at the

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## UCS adds new secondary programs to our growing list of rigorous academic opportunities for students



**Utica Academy for International Studies (International Baccalaureate); Utica Center for Science and Industry set to open in the fall**

Two exciting new learning opportunities are available to incoming Utica Community Schools ninth graders beginning in the 2008-2009 school year. They are the Utica Academy for International Studies, which will operate the International Baccalaureate program, and the Utica Center for Science and Industry, which will offer specialized academic preparation for technical careers.

**International Baccalaureate**

The Utica Academy for International Studies offers qualifying students the opportunity to earn an International Baccalaureate (IB)

diploma following four years of intensive high school study.

IB is known world-wide as the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme, a globally respected curriculum that can gain its graduates acceptance at top colleges and universities in the United States and abroad. It is comprised of a two-year preparation program for ninth and tenth graders that is intended to ready them for the IB Diploma Programme in eleventh and twelfth grades.

Designed to develop a student's international understanding and competence, IB study is focused on mathematics, science, English, world literature, world

history and a second language, plus an additional subject selected by the student. Students are also expected to take part in fine arts, physical activity and community service projects.

Visit [www.ibo.org](http://www.ibo.org) for more information about the worldwide IB program.

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**Utica Community Schools**  
11303 Greendale  
Sterling Heights, MI 48312  
586.797.1000  
[www.uticak12.org](http://www.uticak12.org)

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Utica Community Schools

## *Consistent instruction and assessment help assure that all students have the same opportunities to achieve*

*This is the second in an informational series about how Utica Community Schools is preparing students to meet higher academic expectations*

From kindergarten on, Utica Community Schools is working to prepare students to successfully complete the Michigan Merit Curriculum High School Graduation Requirements. These now call for every student, beginning with the class of 2011, to pass geometry, algebra I, algebra II, biology and chemistry or physics, along with English and other courses, in order to earn their diploma.

Utica Community Schools has also put into place its own Indicators of Excellence – 30 rigorous data-based measurements for reaching our goal that, by 2014, all district students will meet or exceed national, state and district proficiency standards in English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, fine arts and career and technical education. Moreover, it is also our intent that every UCS student will be prepared to successfully pursue some form of higher education after graduation.

Higher expectations make it vital for the district to accurately gauge students' academic strengths and weaknesses at each level.

Common assessments are used to consistently measure how well every student is learning the necessary knowledge and skills set by Michigan's Curriculum Framework and Grade Level Content Expectations, and also to determine whether the district's K-12 curriculum remains aligned with changing state standards.

Both summative and formative assessments are used to improve teaching and learning in Utica Community Schools. Summative assessments indicate whether students have met state or national standards and achieved a year's academic growth. Formative assessments are day-to-day classroom measurements of what a

student has learned and what he or she should be taught next.

Summative assessments include the annual Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) tests, given to students in grades three through nine, and the Michigan Merit Exam (MME), taken by eleventh graders. The latter includes the American College Test, or ACT, which measures a student's preparation for college-level academics and is required for admission to many colleges and universities. Prior to the introduction of the MME two years ago, the ACT was not required of every student.

To help ready students in advance of the eleventh grade MME, tenth graders are given the PSAT. A preparation assessment for the ACT, the PSAT can also serve as a predictor of ability for Advanced Placement coursework, which all students are also being encouraged to pursue.

UCS ninth graders now take the EXPLORE assessment, which provides feedback as to a student's preparedness for the ACT, as well as for challenging high school and post-high school courses.

This also is the first year that all UCS eleventh graders were provided the Princeton Review ACT prep, which included student workshops on test-taking skills, practice tests and parent information sessions. In some cases, eleventh graders had the opportunity to use software designed for practicing ACT-level writing with immediate feedback.

Of the students surveyed after taking the MME in 2007, most responded favorably to the additional preparation opportunities and felt they were less apprehensive and better prepared for the test.

At the elementary level, formative assessments such as the Michigan

Literacy Progress Profile (MLPP) and the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) are a routine part of classroom instruction. These assessments provide standardized milestone indicators of a student's individual reading levels and assist teachers in determining the best strategies for helping students progress.

The need for literacy development continues well beyond elementary school. Higher state standards require all secondary students to understand challenging informational text and to write with clarity.

In response, Utica Community Schools has implemented the Reading Apprenticeship initiative in grades seven through twelve. Through specialized training, junior high and high school teachers have learned to incorporate and reinforce reading for content, vocabulary building

and writing skills in every subject area, including mathematics and science.

Instructional consistency is also aided by the use of pacing guides that serve as master time lines for teachers at the same grade level. Pacing guides map the year's instruction and corresponding assessments in a logical sequence within four ten-week blocks of time so that state-prescribed content for the subject and grade can be covered in every UCS classroom at a pace optimal for student learning.

Vertical teaming is in practice among UCS teachers and building principals as a means to more seamlessly align what is taught from one grade to the next and from elementary school to junior high to senior high.

Structure is based on the four high schools and their "feeder" schools – for example, Henry Ford II High School and Browning, Dresden, Ebeling, Graebner, Harvey and Havel Elementary schools and Bemis Junior High School comprise a vertical team.

In addition, elementary and secondary teachers who teach within a common curricular area (mathematics, for example) come together to compare notes on what and how students are learning in the lower grades and what is expected in the upper grades.

The process is designed to familiarize teachers with programs and terminology used in lower or higher grades, close any learning gaps that may exist between the levels, curb the need for re-teaching at the beginning of the school year and enable teachers and principals to pinpoint needs unique to the students in their particular kindergarten through twelfth grade attendance sequence.

In similar fashion, teachers also engage in horizontal teaming with colleagues at the same grade level in elementary school, or the same curricular area at the secondary level, to unify what is taught across the board.

According to Dr. Mary Johnston, UCS director of school improvement, assessment and grants, the district's biggest challenge is in preparing our student subgroup populations – students who are special needs, limited English speaking, minorities or low income – to meet increasing academic standards. Because all children must achieve more, assessment data is an essential tool in determining where changes in curriculum and instruction are needed to best serve every student.

## REACHING HIGHER

The UCS College Culture – *Aspire, Prepare, Achieve!*



### On the "Write Track"



Wiley Elementary School fifth graders (l-r) **Josh Forkin, Cathlene Malone, Julia Beccari, Hannah Maze, Addison Pawelek** and **Jacob Stout** are justifiably proud of the school's "Writers' Wall" display of their writings and those of their classmates. UCS elementary teachers are working to improve their students' writing skills through programs such as the nationally recognized *Writer's Workshop*. The program is an interdisciplinary technique for building writing fluency through continuous exposure to the step-by-step process of writing.

## The district and its residents fulfill bond issue promises made to UCS students

# What a difference FIVE years makes!

It's hard to believe, but nearly five years have passed since voters in Utica Community Schools overwhelmingly supported the district's last bond issue request. The \$141 million bond issue approved at the election held on September 30, 2003, actually began earlier that year as a recommendation to the Board of Education from the Citizens for Education Project committee (CFEP).

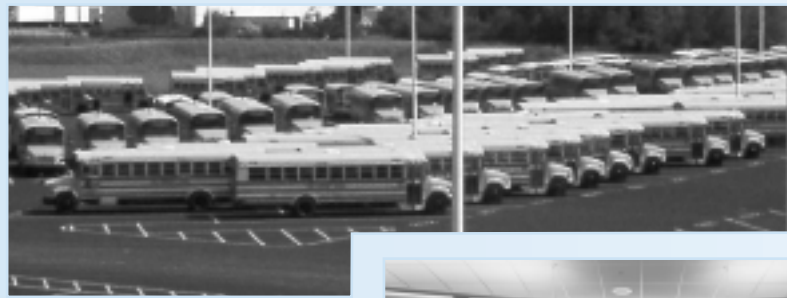
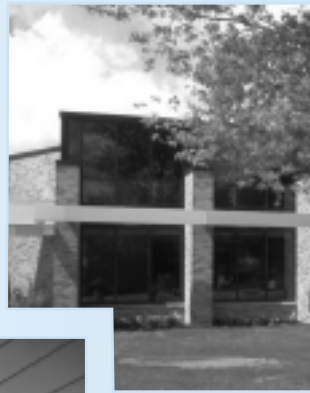
Comprising the CFEP were some 1,000 district residents and employees. Before making their recommendation for new construction and other building projects, the members had evaluated and identified the district's facility needs in terms of demographics (enrollment), technology and capital projects. This was done with an eye on student wellbeing, improving existing facilities and maintaining parity among the schools.

The most ambitious of the bond projects—all of which have been since completed—included a new elementary school, new auxiliary service center, additional classrooms, technology infrastructure and equipment, secondary media and performing art centers, auxiliary gymnasiums, new buses and improved outdoor athletic facilities.

The bonds were sold in segments over five years, \$65 million in 2004, \$32 million in 2005, \$18 million in 2006, \$13 million in 2007, with the final \$13 million sold in January 2008—the last two years indicative of the dwindling amount of work remaining.

The latest bond sale was highlighted by the Aa2 and AA investment ratings of Utica Community Schools by Moody's and Standard and Poor's investment researchers—better ratings than that of the state of Michigan and a clear indicator of the district's fiscal stability.

The aggressive construction schedule seen across the district the past five years was made possible only by community support. As the few remaining projects earmarked from the 2003 bond issue draw to a close over the next school year, we can assure the community that their last bond initiative was completed on time and within budget. It is also time to review with satisfaction the improved facilities the school district and the community together have accomplished:



- Beacon Tree Elementary School first opened its doors to kindergarten through sixth grade students in August 2005. The district's 29th elementary school was named for the original Beacon Tree that had once marked a Shelby Township stop on the Underground Railroad.
- Additions of three classrooms designed for art, science and music instruction were constructed at 26 district elementary schools.
- Construction was completed on the Auxiliary Services Facility in 2005, centrally locating the district's transportation, maintenance, grounds, security and operations departments. The ASF is the workplace hub of more than 300 employees, as well as the district's 250 school buses and 78 service vehicles.
- In 2005, eight new classrooms now used for mathematics, science and English instruction were built at Bemis Junior High School.
- Performing Arts Centers were constructed at Henry Ford II and Eisenhower High schools, each with audience seating for 750. In addition, the Performing Arts Center at Stevenson High School was renovated. Besides being equipped for teaching stage craft and drama classes, the centers are ideal for showcasing



- student performances and are available for community use, as well.
- The existing "little theaters" at Ford II and Eisenhower were remodeled into electronic collaboration centers or ECCs, large rooms infused with technology for distance learning and other non-traditional instruction.
- At Stevenson High School and Eppler Junior High School, new media centers were added, designed to support global learning by electronically connecting students to the world through the latest technology offered within a comfortable, flexible work space. The former libraries at both buildings were remodeled into much needed classrooms.
- The media centers at Eisenhower and Ford II were extensively renovated to afford students modern, technology-centered sites for research and study on par with Stevenson's new facility.
- Auxiliary gymnasiums have been built at all four UCS high schools to accommodate student athletic participation

and the change in competition seasons for some sports.

- Artificial turf was installed at Swinehart and Runkel fields, the respective home athletic fields of Eisenhower and Utica High schools and Stevenson and Ford II High schools. The resilient surface is advantageous to district teams, marching bands and area youth teams because it withstands hard usage regardless of weather conditions.
- Climate control improvements were completed at many district buildings.
- To increase our ability to maintain a safe learning environment for all students, schools received additional security cameras and swipe card access points, and some entrances were reconfigured to be made more secure.
- A total of 110 new school buses have been purchased or are on order.
- To answer the CFEP recommendation that every student have increased access to instructional technology, wireless internet was installed in every UCS classroom and

media center. All buildings received additional computers, including laptops, as well as printers and related equipment.

- A series of technology improvements now give students more opportunities to present and share their knowledge with others, including digital cameras and projectors, technology for live video conferencing from every classroom and mobile presentation systems and video broadcast stations in all the schools.
- To improve the vital link between school and home, technology improvements from the bond issue include an upgraded district phone system, teacher voice mail and homework hotlines, electronic student assessment reports, digital newsletters and increased access to educational websites.
- In support of teaching and learning, a number of technology efficiencies were installed that reduced telecommunications costs, including the main district head end that consolidated

ents



network servers, increased file storage capacity and centralized management of video and data infrastructure.

This summer, the noise of earth movers, hammers and saws will quiet as the few remaining projects from the 2003 bond issue wind down. Some roofing and site work will be done, along with installing new cabinets, countertops and flooring at some schools.

The last big job will take place at Utica High School, where the cafeteria will be renovated and enlarged with more seating. The kitchen will be remodeled and serving areas added. Utica High will also receive an electronic collaboration center (ECC) built in existing space.

Utica Community Schools and its residents can take pride in the new and remodeled school facilities, new technology and safety improvements promised our students in 2003 and enjoyed by them today. Five years of a great school district and a great community working together did, indeed, make a difference!

## From the Superintendent...

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*our goal to create a College Culture for every student in UCS, Michigan's second largest public school district.*

*Anyone who attended the district's Academic Blitz in January could see the community's high level of interest in the rigorous course work available in our high schools. More than 2,000 students and their parents who came to the Blitz had access to information about Advanced Placement courses, curriculum choices, Career and Technical Education, college scholarships and financial aid.*

*They were also among the first in our community to learn about the district's new Center for Science and Industry and the Utica Academy for International Studies, both of which will open to qualifying ninth graders in 2008-2009.*

*Students interested in advanced technical training in the areas of Engineering Technology, Mechatronics and Multi-Media Technology will be able to receive this instruction at the Center for Science and Industry. Mechatronics is a globally-recognized process that blends applications of mechanical, electrical and software engineering to design and improve operating systems in manufacturing and other fields.*

*The Utica Academy for International Studies will offer students unprecedented access to the skills necessary to earn an International Baccalaureate Diploma. Students wishing to attend the Academy or Center programs must complete an application process.*

*These two rigorous programs join a growing list of specialized academic learning opportunities for UCS students, including the Utica Center for Mathematics, Science and Technology, for secondary students with particular interest and talent in these subject areas.*

*Both the Academy and the Center are part of the district's new educational partnership with Armada Area Schools and Mount Clemens Community Schools, funded through a \$12 million grant from the United States Department of Education. The partnership, known as the Alliance for Academic Excellence, is intended to expand learning opportunities for students enrolled in the three school districts.*

*Within the partnership, Armada and Mount Clemens students will have access to Utica's programs. Conversely, our students will be able to take advantage of specialized courses offered in those districts.*

*Utica Community Schools enjoys a long history and tradition of excellence and high student achievement. We acknowledge the ongoing support of our parents and residents who work with us in developing and sustaining a College Culture for our students.*

*For example, our local business and municipal professionals help by participating in the Career Focus Luncheon, which introduces our sixth graders to the world of work each year. The Luncheon itself is the result of a partnership between the UCS Foundation for Educational Excellence, the Advisor & Source Newspapers and the Sterling Heights Area Chamber of Commerce. Proceeds from the luncheon help support district educational programs and we are grateful for the Foundation's assistance.*

*Our community has continued to support Bond Issues, which allow us to create and maintain a safe, orderly and challenging learning environment in the district. Technology purchased with Bond Issue dollars provides a window on the world, as our students interact in real time with students from around the globe.*

*Finally, UCS parents are our greatest partners. Each and every day they entrust their most valuable asset – their children – to our care. They support our efforts to provide a rigorous and enriching academic experience for our 30,000 students – an experience we believe will result in a highly educated work force that will stabilize and improve Michigan's economy.*

*We know that striking a balance between providing rigorous new learning opportunities for our students while maintaining a balanced budget in these times of economic challenge is not easy. Governor Jennifer Granholm has suggested that Michigan's public schools will receive new money by creating smaller "schools within a school" in existing high schools.*

*Often, these programs generate new operating dollars only in school districts whose students do not meet required academic achievement – not an option for high performing districts like UCS.*

*It's been further suggested that districts provide all-day kindergarten – something UCS already offers at some schools. Again, notwithstanding our understanding of the importance of full-day kindergarten for their academic success, we will not receive additional dollars by lengthening the school day for our youngest learners.*

*Whatever happens with Michigan's economy, in Utica Community Schools we will continue being both diligent in our efforts to remain fiscally conservative and responsible for providing the best possible education for our students.*

*Please take a few moments to review the many updates contained in the pages of this edition of Focus for the Community. When you do, you will find that the promises we have made over the years to our students and our residents have been kept. And, as your superintendent of schools, I pledge that we will continue to work with you to assure that Every Child Achieves.*

## Rose Kidd students replicate a rainforest

Did you know that rainforests cover only six percent of the planet, yet they are home to fifty percent of the earth's animal species? Rose Kidd Elementary School students are discovering many such interesting facts about this vital ecological system, courtesy of the school's Academically Talented and Gifted student group (ATG).

Guided by teacher Jennifer Stuehmer, the ATG students adopted "Saving the Planet" as their project theme for the school year. They began the year by learning about the problems of hunger and disease in Africa from the Internet. Next, they raised \$135 for Netting Nations, [www.nettingnations.org](http://www.nettingnations.org), a charity that provides mosquito nets to protect people from malaria-bearing insects.

After studying rainforests and why they must be preserved, the students created (with help from parents) their own "rain forest" from paper-mâché and paint in the school's science room.

Examples of native plants, animals and insects greet forest visitors at every turn.

The ATG students read aloud the book, "The Great Kapok Tree" by Lynne Cherry, to

their schoolmates to increase their understanding of conservation before leading them on tours through the Rose Kidd rainforest.

*First graders **Michal Krajewski** and **Kathya Saucedo** (forefront), were introduced to the rainforest's paper-mâché alligator by teacher **Jennifer Stuehmer**, fourth grader **Robert Marshall** and fifth grader, **Kirstie Peck**.*



## Points of pride

The following UCS twelfth graders qualified as Finalists in the 2008 National Merit Scholarship competition. They are among the top 15,000 scorers of the 1.4 million students tested nationwide:

Eisenhower – **Charles Andrews**; Ford II – **Adam Geml** and **Aaron M. Taylor**; Stevenson – **James Courtois**; Utica – **Derek Plotkowski** and **Christopher Sigler**

These students were recognized by National Merit as Commended Students for placing in the top 50,000 test-takers nationally:

Eisenhower – **Stephen Ragatzki** and **Tiffany Wen**; Ford II – **Claire LeGuen** and **Sarah M. Smith**; Stevenson – **Anthony Kraus**; Utica HS – **Kristina Hermann**

Stevenson's **David Redman** received a National Merit Achievement Award, presented to outstanding African-American students in the Merit competition. Eisenhower's **Lauren Andrzejewski** qualified for a Special Scholarship funded by business sponsors through the National Merit Corporation.



The following teachers were nominated for the Michigan Teacher of the Year award from the Michigan Department of Education: **Jane Kort**, foreign language – Ford II; **Christopher Layson**, social studies – Eisenhower; **Leslie Kramer**, fifth grade – Magahay Elementary; **Patricia George**, fourth grade – Wiley Elementary and **Kristine Cody**, mathematics – Heritage JHS.



The following students received Gold Key Awards, the top prize at the regional Scholastic Art Awards competition:

- Jeannette JHS – **Letitia Panea**, Drawing
- Shelby JHS – **Austin Heath**, Photography; **Kayla Lapworth**, Digital Imagery
- Eisenhower High School – **Mallory Meshinski**, Art Portfolio, Painting (2)
- Ford II HS – **Kathryn Boyer**, Graphic Design; **Stephanie Chisholm**, Drawing; **Daniel DiGregorio**, Photography Portfolio; **Marissa Havers**, Art Portfolio; **Erin Keith**, Art Portfolio; **Kari Kilpela**, Art

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## "It's all for the kids!"

continued from page 1

March 10 Board meeting and joined the district's Volunteer Hall of Fame.

Teresa Dwyer began volunteering at Schwarzkoff Elementary School when her eldest child, Eric, started preschool. Several years later, she is still a familiar face. As her other two children, Amanda and Jason, advanced through the elementary grades, Mrs. Dwyer helped in the classrooms, chaperoned field trips and was an active member and officer in the Schwarzkoff Volunteer Group.

When her children became interested in the Science Olympiad, she volunteered to be a coach. Boosted by her efforts and enthusiasm, Schwarzkoff soon had a winning team. As Teresa's brood moved on to Davis Junior High School and Stevenson High School, she volunteered at both buildings, but still found time to maintain her Schwarzkoff connection. She continues coaching the school's Science Olympiad teams because she enjoys working with the students and, as her daughter reminds her, "You make a difference, Mom."

In December, you may not see as much of Harry Radtke at Oakbrook Elementary School as you normally would. But when Harry isn't around, Santa Claus manages to visit the children in their classrooms, spreading cheer and excitement as he listens patiently to their wishes and encourages them to help out at home.



Twenty-year school volunteer **Lou Ann Ross**, Infection Control Practitioner at William Beaumont Hospital in Troy, finds time to work with both current and future Utica Community Schools students! Photographed at her workplace, Mrs. Ross hands newborn **Kellen Tanner Struck** over to his mom, Utica High School chemistry teacher, **Courtney Struck**, as his dad, **Dave Struck**, looks on. According to his proud parents, Kellen will join the UCS kindergarten class of 2013!

To Oakbrook students such as second graders **Paige Daniels** and **Jake Milewski**, "Mr. Harry" is a helpful, familiar face at their school. **Harry Radtke** began volunteering more than 20 years ago when his children attended. Both he and his wife, **Chris Radtke**, a preschool teacher at Oakbrook, enjoy supporting the school's activities. Harry, a printer and owner of EGI Solutions, also volunteers at the Humane Society.



A jolly year-round fixture at Oakbrook since the days when his own children were in school, Mr. Radtke loves talking with and listening to the students. According to Principal Brian Shepard, Harry always has a little joke or story to share. For more than 20 years, he has performed jobs around the school, such as installing fences, wheel-barrowing mulch, carrying equipment and working at year-end celebrations. He even built a playhouse for the preschool room. But when pressed, he

admits that being Santa is his favorite volunteer activity.

Lou Ann Ross proves that when something needs to get done, ask a busy person. As a registered nurse, she was able to take advantage of her flexible work schedule to volunteer at Schuchard Elementary School. When her oldest child, Will, now 25, entered kindergarten, she began as a classroom volunteer. Her activities expanded as each of her four children entered school, the older two at Schuchard and the younger two at Schwarzkoff Elementary School.

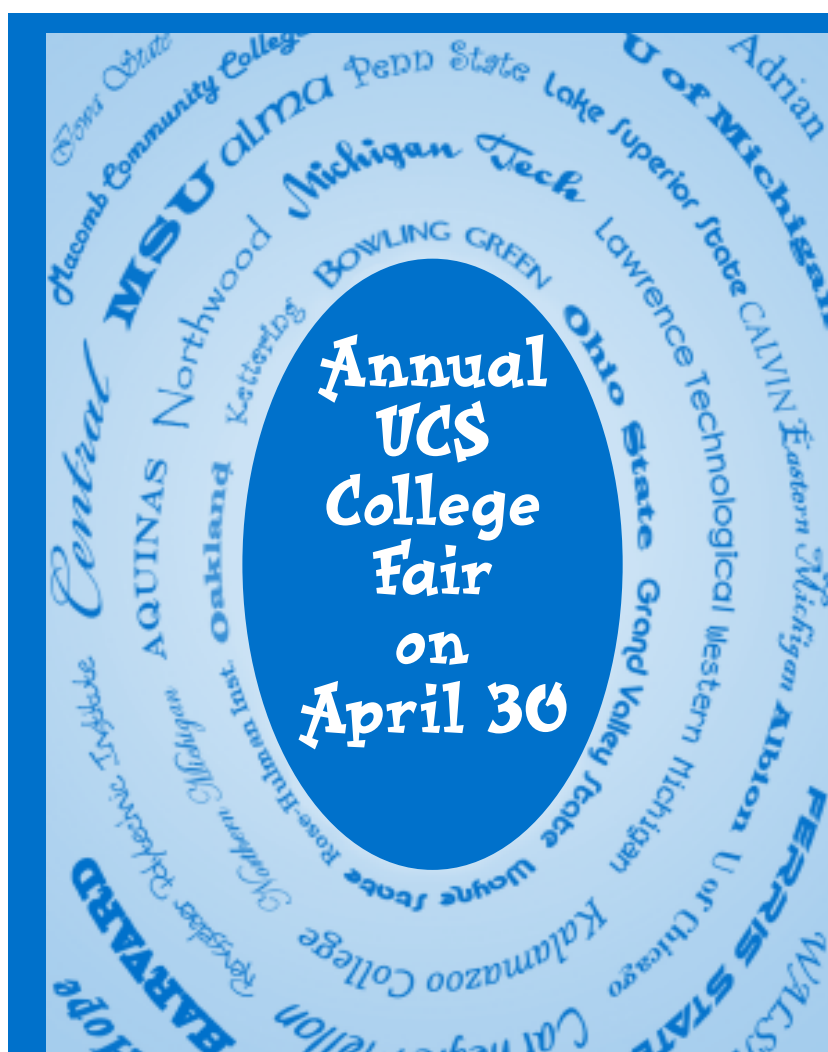
Over the years, she volunteered in the media center and also helped introduce computer technology to students by working one-on-one. As her children progressed through Jeannette Junior High and Utica and Stevenson High schools, Mrs. Ross could always be counted upon to chaperone dances and field trips and make treats for bake sales and other events. She is also a member of the district's Enrollment Distribution Advisory Committee and serves as an annual presenter from the medical field at the UCS Career Expo.

## 2008 UCS 4-Year and Highly Selective College Fair

Henry Ford II High School  
11911 Clinton River Road  
Sterling Heights

Utica Community Schools will host its third annual college fair on Wednesday, April 30, from 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. at Henry Ford II High School. Representatives from 50 or more Michigan and out-of-state colleges and universities will be on hand to highlight their school's academic programs. UCS students, especially tenth and eleventh graders, and their parents, are encouraged to attend.

Co-Sponsored by Utica Community Schools and the UCS Foundation for Educational Excellence



## Points of pride

continued from page 5

Portfolio, Painting; **Nicole Nichter**, Art Portfolio; **Jeanna Radzinski**, Digital Imagery; **Kela Robinson**, Ink Painting; **Dana Rothe**, Art Portfolio; **Kaitlyn Swiderski**, Mixed Media; **Anthony Ventimiglia**, Art Portfolio, Ceramics/Glass

• **Utica High School** – **Alexander Buzzalini**, Digital Imagery (2), Photography Portfolio; **Jane Cerovina**, Photography Portfolio; **Brenna Fortune**, Sculpture; **Carolyn Goettsch**, Drawing; **Sarah Jezak**, Digital Imagery, Photography Portfolio; **Jongmee Kim**, Digital Imagery; **Lauren Kroetsch**, Photography Portfolio; **Michelle Lepinat**, Photography Portfolio



Eisenhower cross-country runner **Jon Rock** finished third in the Michigan High School Athletic Association division I state final with a personal best and school record of 15 minutes, 37.8 seconds. Jon also carries a 3.77 GPA.



Ford II diver **Marcella Barretta** finished second in the MHSAA division I state finals, capping a four-year career in which she finished among the state's top five divers each year. A 3.97 GPA student, she will continue her diving career at Oakland University.



Stevenson senior **Ashley Wilk** is a Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Michigan Caring for Children Angel Award recipient. The award is presented to individuals who better the lives of children through their exceptional volunteer efforts. She is also active in the Rosemary Hockney Foundation, helping the needs of young cancer patients at Children's Hospital.

## Important dates in the 2008 school year

**May 23**  
No school – Teacher Professional Development

**May 26**  
Memorial Day – No school

**June 11**  
Secondary exams, secondary half day

**June 12**  
Secondary exams, all students half day

**June 13**  
No school – Summer recess begins

## Table talk about bright futures

The Career Focus Luncheon is a long-standing Utica Community Schools tradition. For the past 15 years, the district's sixth graders, roughly 2,000 strong each year, have enjoyed this unique, real-world learning experience.

Penna's of Sterling Heights will again host the two-day event, scheduled this year on April 30 and May 1. The sixth graders will enjoy a meal and grown-up conversation with area business and municipal professionals.

The day gives the young students an opportunity to learn from successful working adults and come away with a better idea of the education and skills they will need for 21st Century careers. The event highlights a unit of classroom study in which the students explore various career paths and learn about workplace expectations.

Keynote speaker both days will be Utica Community Schools alumnus Karen Mac Donald, Communications Director for Taubman Centers, Inc. She is in charge of public relations



Keynote speaker  
Karen Mac Donald

activities for the company and its 24 shopping centers nationwide, including the Mall at Partridge Creek and Great Lakes Crossing. Mac Donald, a Michigan State University graduate, attended Messmore Elementary, Davis Junior High and Stevenson High School.

The Utica Community Schools Foundation for Educational Excellence, the Sterling Heights Area Chamber of Commerce and the *Advisor & Source Newspapers* co-sponsor the Career Focus Luncheon in cooperation with Utica

Community Schools. All proceeds benefit the Foundation's work on behalf of UCS students.

Since it was established 22 years ago, the volunteer UCS Foundation has supported the education of district students by fundraising to provide additional learning opportunities beyond what the district's budget can allow. Classroom instructional grants, scholarships, summer reading programs, a college fair,

after-school programs and academic tutoring for secondary students are some of the advantages the Foundation provides.

If you would like to support the Foundation's work, either by serving as a workplace mentor at the Career Focus Luncheon, making a donation or helping in some other way, please call 586.797.6953 to leave your name and daytime phone number.



It's hard to tell who was having more fun at last year's Career Focus Luncheon – business sponsor **Bill Chope**, vice president of Crest Lincoln Mercury in Sterling Heights, or the West Utica sixth graders seated at his table.

## UCS adds new secondary programs

continued from page 1

For school year 2008-2009, the Academy will admit 125 ninth graders. A new group of freshmen will be added each year until 500 ninth through twelfth graders are enrolled. The first IB graduates will be in the class of 2012.

### Utica Center for Science and Industry

Also available to UCS freshmen this fall is the Utica Center for Science and Industry, which will admit qualifying students interested in learning about Engineering Technology, Mechatronics or Multi-Media Technology.

Mechatronics is a globally-used method that blends mechanical, electronics and software engineering concepts to create integrated automated operating systems used in many industrial fields.

Multi-Media Technology will include digital print and video design, animation, video game design and television production.

Center for Science and Industry students will learn the "why" and relevance of their high school courses in relationship to real work situations. Within the

four-year program, they will have access to work-based learning opportunities such as job shadowing, mentoring and internships. The Center will open with 100 freshmen and expand a grade each year. To apply, students must pass an admission exam and have teacher recommendations.

Students will attend the Center for half of the school day with the remainder at their home school. Course work begins with a two-year preparation for ninth and tenth graders.

Ninth graders will take a full year of English, taught in the context of technical reading and writing, and geometry, with an emphasis on technical mathematics. They will also take a semester each of Art Foundations and Drafting/CAD.

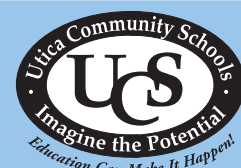
Tenth graders will take English 10 and Algebra I, and, depending on their choice of discipline – Engineering Technology, Mechatronics or Multi-Media Technology – will take courses to prepare them for that field of study. Eleventh and twelfth graders will pursue more focused coursework within their discipline in addition to English and mathematics.

The new secondary programs are part of Utica Community Schools' educational partnership with Armada Area Schools and Mount Clemens Community Schools. The partnership, called the Alliance for Academic

Excellence, was established to create additional learning opportunities for students from all three districts. As such, Armada and Mount Clemens students have access to the UCS programs.

### Find out more

Detailed information about the new UCS programs, including the application process and frequently asked questions, is available online at [www.uticak12.org](http://www.uticak12.org) or by calling 586.797.6807 for the International Baccalaureate program or 586.797.6806 for the Center for Science and Industry.



586.797.1000

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Visit [www.uticak12.org](http://www.uticak12.org) for information on programs and curriculum, school news, district calendar, annual reports and employment opportunities.

Information about the district is also available on UCS Television, which broadcasts on cable channels 15 and 22.